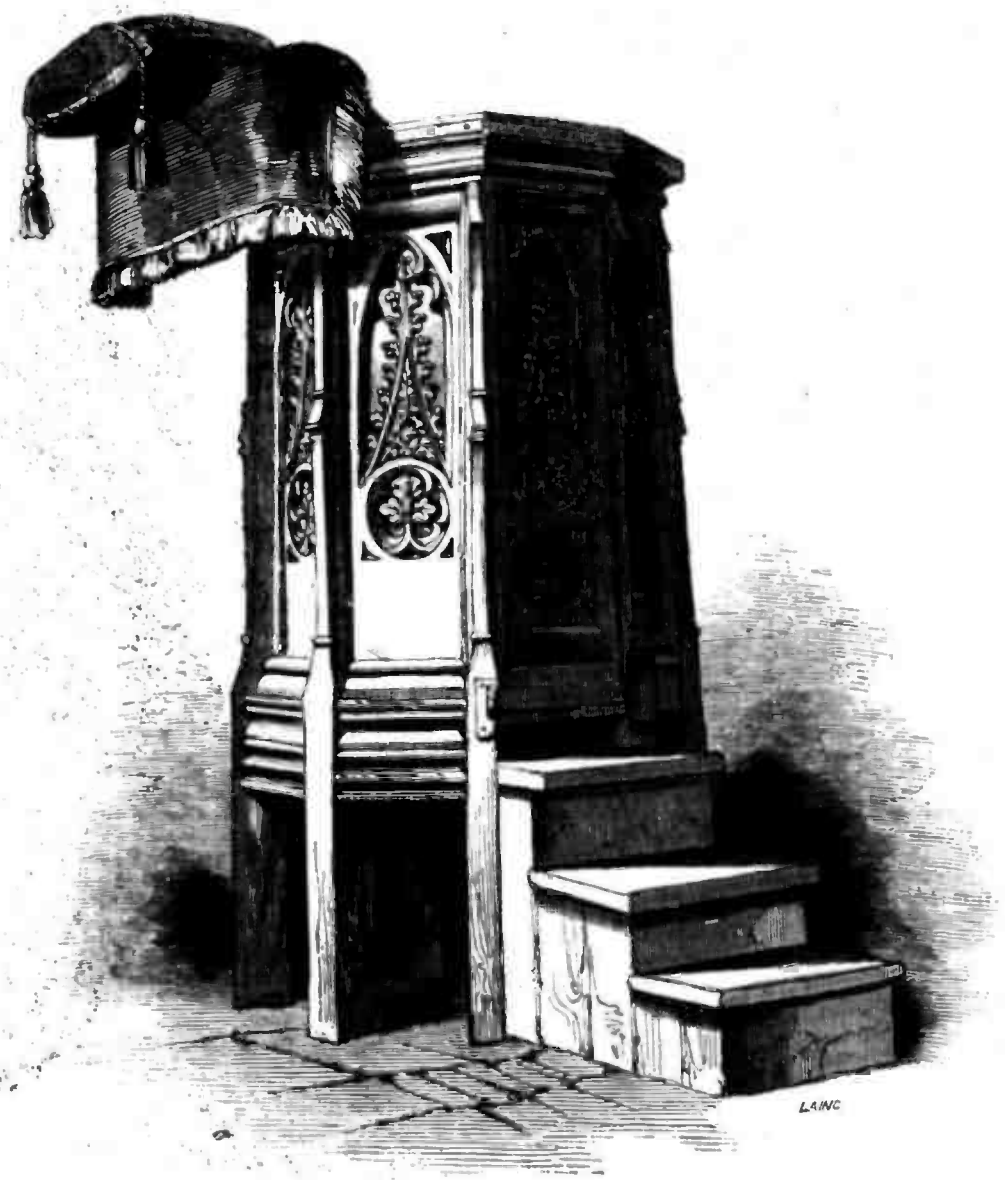


WOODEN PULPIT—WENDEN CHURCH, ESSEX.

WOODEN PULPIT.—WENDEN CHURCH, ESSEX.

A FINE example of the wood carving of the fifteenth century, and an interesting specimen of an early pulpit, is afforded by an engraving of that in Wenden Church, Essex, a primitive structure, which exhibits traces of an early Norman foundation. The pulpit has nine sides, seven of which are carved alike in each panel. The door occupies two sides, and has an extra quatrefoil inserted in the carved panels. The pulpit is in fine preservation, and the carving singularly perfect, and sharp in its outline. It stands 5 feet 7½ inches in height, and measures one foot across the top of each panel, which, following the outline of the pulpit, decreases upwards.

LONDON IMPROVEMENTS.—A bill was brought into the Common Council on Friday in last week, under the powers of the City Improvement Act of 1847. It proposes to raise 300,000*l.* for improvements from Cannon-street to St. Paul's; and 200,000*l.* for other improvements not yet determined on.

BUILDING SOCIETIES.—It is said that the number of building societies in England and Wales now amounts to 1,200.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.

THE opening meeting of the present session was held on Monday evening last; Mr. S. Angell, vice-president, in the chair. A long list of donations having been announced, Mr. W. P. Griffith was admitted a fellow, and the certificates of various candidates were read.

The Chairman said, that as that was the first meeting for the session, he would intrude on their attention for a few minutes. He much regretted that the president, Earl de Grey, was unable to attend; his lordship's communications, however, shewed that he still felt the same interest in the prosperity of the Institute as he had ever exhibited. The chairman had to allude with regret to the loss of a colleague, Mr. Allen, who, although a junior member, had made considerable advance in his profession. He felt bound also to allude to the death of Mr. Cottingham, although he was not a member of the Institute: it was the desire of the Institute to pay tribute to ability, whether in their own ranks or out of them. Notwithstanding the financial difficulties, there were many new buildings rising in the metropolis, and although they were not all original, he thought it satisfactory that such good models were taken as those by Sansovino. The new churches rising were mostly satisfactory, as well in the material used, Kentish rag and Caen stone, as in the design. The sanatory question was also forcing itself on architects: ventilation and drainage called for their careful consideration. In conclusion, he would remind all the members of the necessity of contributing to the general information; many had been travelling during the recess, and he hoped that their sketches and note-books would furnish instruction at some of the meetings. The students, he remarked, would find every facility provided for them, and he hoped they would largely avail themselves of the advantages offered.

Mr. M. D. Wyatt then read a paper on "Mosaics, as applied to Architectural Decoration," which we shall give *in extenso* next week.

Mr. Donaldson, in remarking on the durability of decorations in mosaics, said there were some fine specimens in our country—one he particularly remembered in Leicester; and he thought it was very desirable that we should have a catalogue of all existing specimens in England. It was much to be regretted, he thought, that our royal family regarded with such little interest the tombs of their ancestors in Westminster Abbey, some of which display fine mosaic decorations, and, if properly restored, would serve as a school for us, without going to Greece and Italy. He was compelled to say that a better feeling was evinced in France.

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